

Message Text

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13

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 L-03 SS-20 NSC-10 DRC-01

DOT-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01 SPC-03 SAM-01 /115 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8032

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

UNCLAS LONDON 02127

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, FR, UK

SUBJ: CIVAIR - CONCORDE

REF: PARIS 4046

1. THE BRITISH PRESS HAS GIVEN PROMINENT COVERAGE TO REPORTS OF THE FRENCH INTERMINISTERIAL COMMITTEE MEETING (REFTEL), PARTICULARLY THOSE ASPECTS RELATING TO FUTURE OF CONCORDE PROGRAM. FINANCIAL TIMES (FT) PARIS CORRESPONDENT, GILES MERRITT, WRITES THAT CONCORDE DECISIONS TAKEN INVOLVE INCREASING WING SURFACES BY 8 PERCENT, ENGINE THRUST BY 10 PERCENT AND FITTING LARGER FUEL TANKS. HE QUOTES UNIDENTIFIED FRENCH AVIATION EXPERTS AS SAYING FUEL

MODIFICATIONS ALONE WOULD COST AROUND 40 MILLION POUNDS AND OVERALL MODIFICATION PROGRAM MAY EXCEED 150 MILLION POUNDS.

2. FT AEROSPACE CORRESPONDENT, MICHAEL DONNE, WRITES THAT BRITISH OFFICIALS HAVE NOT BEEN SHOWN THE SECRET REPORT PREPARED BY FRENCH ENGINEER RENE BLOCH AND ARE STILL "IN THE DARK" AS TO FRENCH VIEWS. DONNE REPORTS THAT UNCERTAINTIES OF BRITISH ELECTIONS ALSO
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INHIBITS ANY UK COMMENT ON REPORTS OF FRENCH MINISTERS MEETING BUT, HE SAYS, "IT SEEMS CLEAR, THAT THERE IS

LITTLE ENTHUSIASM IN WHITEHALL AT THE PROSPECT OF
HAVING TO SPEND ANOTHER 150 MILLION POUNDS ON IMPROVING
THE AIRCRAFT."

3. DAVID NICHOLSON, CHAIRMAN, BRITISH AIRWAYS, WHICH
HAS ORDERED FIVE OF THE TOTAL OF NINE AIRCRAFT THUS
FAR SOLD, IS QUOTED AS SAYING RISING FUEL COSTS COULD
BOOST CONCORDE PASSENGER FARES BY ANOTHER 15 TO 20
PERCENT BEYOND THE FIRST-CLASS PLUS 10 PERCENT FARE

PREVIOUSLY ENVISAGED.

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